

1. (Currently Amended) A payment form discrimination method for discriminating a payment form which states at least a payee account number and a payment amount, comprising:

acquiring image data of the form by optically reading the form;

searching by a computer for the payee account number in the image data at an unknown position in accordance with an account number searching rule;

determining by the computer a type of the form based on the payee account number from a document information table that stores account numbers correlated with types of the form; and

recovering by the computer other data from locations according to the determined type of the form,

wherein said account number searching rule comprises:

searching for hyphens in the image data;

~~judging whether or not a plurality of~~ determining at least one location of a specified hyphen arrangement formed by at least one group among the hyphens detected by said search ~~are part of a specified hyphen arrangement;~~

character- recognizing the image data in areas surrounding the at least one location ~~detected hyphens if judged to be part of~~ the specified hyphen arrangement; and

determining ~~whether or not a result of an account number based on the~~ character recognition and matches any comparing the account number with account numbers registered in said document information table, the matched account number being the payee account number.